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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington D.C. 20250 (202) 447-4330

Letter No. 2511

June 7, 1991

DEADLY BIRD DISEASE -- Four outbreaks of exotic Newcastle disease -- a deadly viral disease of poultry & pet birds -- have prompted USDA to alert consumers that the pet birds they're buying may be terminally ill with a sickness that could infect other birds, including poultry flocks. "If this disease enters poultry flocks, losses could climb into millions of dollars," says James W. Glosser, administrator of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service. Buyers should make sure the birds they buy are wearing a circular stainless steel USDA-approved leg band, which is engraved with three letters & three numbers. Contact: Margaret Webb (301) 436-6573.

NUTRITION INFO CENTER QUESTIONS -- From "How do you cook penguin?" to "How long can you freeze chocolate chips?", the Food & Nutrition Information Center of USDA's National Agricultural Library has heard it all. This September will mark the 20th anniversary of the center, which is still one of the best government sources for the most current info on food & human nutrition. Contact: Brian Norris (301) 344-3778.

WALKING & CHOLESTEROL -- A regular program of walking can lower your blood cholesterol, but only if you do enough of it, says Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service Nutritionist Sara Seals. A recent study at Brigham Young University in Utah helped confirm recent research showing low intensity exercise in sufficient amounts can have positive cardiovascular benefits. "By walking just 30 minutes a day," Seals says, "you can gain a major health benefit." Contact: Sara Seals (504) 388-4141.

WORLD ECONOMY & EXCHANGE RATES -- Economic activity for the world in 1991 will be slower than in 1990 -- because virtually all the developed countries face declining real output growth, USDA economists say. However, developing countries as a group are expected to improve their overall performance in 1991, as Asia continues its output expansion & Latin America benefits from much lower inflation. Inflation, led by oil prices expected to be at or below 1990 levels, will subside significantly this year, paving the way for recovery in 1992. Contact: Alberta Jerardo (202) 219-0717.

HISTORIC PAPERS USED IN RESEARCH -- USDA's National Ag Library will use an historic collection of the papers of George Washington Carver to test the feasibility of converting written materials to electronic images on high-capacity, laser-readable discs, known as CD-ROM's. Carver's papers can then be used by ag & research libraries worldwide. The libraries will then evaluate the effectiveness of the system for making scientific info more accessible. Contact: Brian Norris (301) 344-3778.



LAND REFORM IN CENTRAL EUROPE -- The ownership & structure of ag land is the subject of intense debate through Central Europe -- Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria & Albania. The new governments of post-communist Central Europe have enacted a significant body of land-holding legislation. Although it is hard to document, the share of land under private cultivation has certainly increased, USDA economists say. The future of state & collective farms falls within the framework of privatization. The claims of ownership on these lands constitute a major problem for governments, as does the question of the optimal farm size to achieve efficient production. **Contact: Nancy J. Cochran & Mark R. Lundell (202) 219-0621.**

BUGGING THE BUGS -- USDA scientists are trying to find new ways to keep insects out of packages of cereal, flour, cake mixes & pet foods. The scientists are working to find the weaknesses in the packaging & study how insects get in the products. **Michael Mullen**, an entomologist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, says thus far, the scientists have found packages with plastic wrap on the outside & those with heavier plastic wrap on the inside are more insect-resistant. Also, they've found well-sealed openings and glass, plastic & metal containers are most bug-proof. **Contact: Michael Mullen (202) 912) 233-7981.**

EXPORT FORECAST -- U.S. ag exports should reach \$37 billion in fiscal 1991 & export volume is expected to be 129 million tons, USDA economists say. Compared with last year, exports are expected to be down \$3.1 billion & 20 million tons. Reduced grain exports account for much of the expected drop. Other reasons include last year's record world wheat production, record grain production in China & near-record output in the Soviet Union. **Contact: Steve MacDonald (202) 219-0822.**

AGNEWSFAX -- A new service from USDA uses the recorded voice of USDA Radio's **Gary Crawford** to help you get specific USDA news releases on your FAX machine. To try AgNewsFAX, use a touchtone phone connected to your facsimile machine & dial (202) 475-3944. Crawford's recorded voice will then guide you through the service. **Contact: Diane O'Conner (202) 447-4026.**

EDIBLE FRUIT & VEGETABLE COATING -- Several companies are interested in developing a new edible coating that retards ripening & browning of fresh fruits & vegetables. "The coating extends the shelf life of produce without harming quality even when stored at 70 degrees Fahrenheit, or normal room temperature," says **Myrna Nisperos-Carriedo**, a USDA scientist. The USDA-developed coating is water based & contains natural food ingredients. USDA has applied for a patent on the invention, but private companies can license it and develop the coating. **Contact: Myrna O. Nisperos-Carriedo (813) 293-4133.**

COTTON & WOOL OUTLOOK -- Last year's cotton production totaled 15.5 million 480-lb. bales, 27 percent ahead of last season. During the 1990-91 marketing year, both U.S. & world cotton prices have risen above those of the past season. Wool production was down 1 percent during 1990; average fleece weight was nearly 8 pounds. **Contact: Scott Sanford (202) 219-0840.**

Editor: Marci Hilt Phone: (202) 447-6445

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1774 -- If you're looking for an unusual pet, you might like a Vietnamese potbellied pig. On this edition of **Agriculture USA**, **Gary Crawford** introduces these rare & somewhat expensive "little piggies." (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1256 -- The Americans & food quiz; California avocados popular in the Far East; learning about the Medfly; looking for a lawn care company; those little piggies. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1764 -- USDA News Highlights; GATT update; 1992 wheat program; U.S. cotton production; sales-a-poppin'. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1423 -- Testing vitamin B6 status; vitamins & medicine; elderly strength training; selenium & cancer; new white sweet potato. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Mon., June 17, milk production; Tues., June 18, crop/weather update, cattle on feed; Wed., June 19, ag outlook, Thurs., June 20, catfish production, cherry production; Fri., June 21, ag resources outlook, livestock/poultry update; Mon., June 24, ag trade update, poultry production. (These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling!)

DIAL THE USDA RADIO NEWSLINES (202) 488-8358 or 8359.

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION NEWS SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on USDA's Ag Research Center in Beltsville, Md.; **Will Pemble** reports on USDA research to preserve tropical fruits; **Dave Luciani**, Michigan State Univ., on controlling mosquitoes; **Joe Courson**, Univ. of Georgia, on getting rid of fleas.

ACTUALITIES -- **Ray Motha**, USDA meteorologist, with a crop & weather update; USDA Economist **Larry Van Meir** with a feedgrains forecast; USDA Economist **Nathan Childs** on California's sugarbeet industry; USDA Soil Conservationist **Leroy Brown** on conservation compliance plans.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on urban national forests; **Lynn Wyvill** on USDA Forest Service partnerships; **DeBoria Janifer** on USDA Forest Service education programs.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update**, five minutes of USDA farm program info, in news desk format with B-Roll footage.

Available on Satellite **Westar 4**, Transponder **12D (Channel 23)**, audio **6.2 or 6.8**:

THURSDAY 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT
SATURDAY 10 - 10:45 a.m., EDT
MONDAY 8 - 8:45 a.m., EDT

NOTE THIS ONE-TIME CHANGE -- On Saturday, June 22, only, from 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m., the coordinates will be **Westar 4**, Transponder **19**. This is a one-time only transponder change.

OFFMIKE

PART-TIME FARMERS...got their crops in late due to excessive moisture, but two-weeks of good weather gave them the opportunity to complete the effort, says **Skip Davis** (WASK, Lafayette, Ind.). Recent rains have produced short-term ponding but crops generally are responding to abundant moisture.

THREE WEEKS AWAY...from harvest and wheat is looking good, says **Steve Bugbee** (KXXX/KQLS, Colby, Kan.). There has been an infestation of miller moths as they migrate west, but no damage reported yet. Corn is responding to good moisture conditions. Steve will be covering live the expected big turnout at Beef Empire Days in Garden City.

CROP IS SWIMMING AWAY...literally, says **John Winfield** (Mississippi Network, Jackson). Heavy rains have flooded catfish ponds allowing catfish to escape & undesirable species to intrude. John says cotton producers are 50 percent behind schedule & harvest will be on borrowed time, but the window remains open to plant soybeans.

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Office of Public Affairs
Radio-TV Division
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250-1300

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1991 FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL...will be conducted on The Mall in Washington, D.C., by the Smithsonian Institution, June 28 to July 7. It will feature live coverage by farm broadcasters. **Rich Hawkins** (KRVN, Lexington, Neb.) & **Lee Kline** (WHO, Des Moines, Iowa) were invited by festival officials to participate in this year's activities. The theme is "Family Farming in the Heartland." USDA will provide its usual coverage of the festival -- daily on USDA Radio's Newsline & three-times a week on the satellite feed from USDA TV News.

1991 HURRICANE SEASON...began June 1 & runs through Nov. 30. First storm to be named Ana.

REMINDER...that on June 30 USDA is closing its pioneering "USDA Online" computer service. Subscribers can transfer to USDA's Computerized Information Delivery (CID) service where more information is available. A new Farm Broadcasters Letter is entered every Friday on CID.

VIC POWELL
Chief, Radio & TV Division